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Approved For Release 2001/07/12 : CIA-RDP80-01826R000300140089-1

13 MAY 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Support)

SUBJECT : Current Interest Items

1. Mutual Prohibition Against Agency Employment of Peace Corps Members:

We have completed our meetings with the Executive Director, Civil Service Commission, and the Director of Personnel for the Peace Corps on this subject. Both seemed pleased to have the briefing and, in Mr. Irons' case, he indicated reassurance that our practice was indeed that of our announced policy.

In addition, our headquarters and field recruitment officers have been reminded of the rule to ensure against any inadvertent violation in early discussion with an applicant.

2. Payroll Deduction for Charitable Contributions; Sick Leave System:

When I met with Mr. Irons concerning the Peace Corps matter, we discussed some other matters of current interest. Specifically, he mentioned the fact that the possibility of permitting payroll deductions for charitable contributions was again under consideration. Without committing himself to any specific position on this matter, Mr. Irons commented briefly on the administrative problems which various agencies anticipated if such a procedure were to be adopted and remarked on some of the more substantive arguments: on the "pro" side it is believed that a payroll deduction system (aside from being a convenience to the employee) would diminish the current loss rates on pledges made by Government personnel (in the neighborhood of 10% against a national average of about 7%; the Agency's rate is about 3%); on the "con" side is the belief that employees will be pressured into authorizing a deduction actually beyond their means. As you have perhaps noted in the press, the Congress is also considering considerable extension of the authorization to make payroll deductions for various other purposes such as union dues and credit union deposits or payments.

Regarding the sick leave system, Mr. Irons referred to a discussion at a recent IAG meeting at which a detailed CSC study on the use of sick leave had been reviewed. The consensus of that meeting was to recommend no change in the present system. I told Mr. Irons that we had discussed at staff level in my office the possibility of a revised system which would balance out accruals with normal requirements and be related to a system of insurance against prolonged illness. (At present, employees with relatively short periods of service are unable to accumulate sufficient sick leave to cover prolonged illness while those with long service generally have accumulated more than they need. There seems to be increasing pressure on the one hand to provide some form of compensation for these accumulations at the time an individual retires and growing concern on the other hand for the considerable dollar value they represent.) Mr. Irons expressed interest in our proposal and I have agreed to provide a more detailed paper on it to him on an informal and informational basis.

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CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C

Approved For Release 2001/07/12 : CIA-RDP80-01826R000300140089-1

AUTH: HR 70-2

DATE: 1/6/03/8 REVIEWER: 018995

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GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

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3. Special Interest Applicant [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] application forms and test results have been received and he appears to be a good JOT candidate. However, certain items in his Medical history require early evaluation by the Medical Staff. We have invited [REDACTED] to schedule a trip to Washington as soon as possible for medical examination and interviews with JOTF staff officers.

4. Blood Donor Program:

Tuesday, 7 May was Bloodmobile Day at headquarters. 168 prospective donors reported (of which 43 were "walk-ins") and 158 were accepted. This is substantially less than our April experience when 190 pints of blood were collected from 204 prospects. The April donors were from a different group, however, since we recruit in about one-half of the Agency offices on alternate months to maintain the required eight week lapse between donations. When the May group was solicited in March, they produced 186 prospective donors who donated 174 pints of blood; this figure is more nearly comparable to the 168 pints collected last Tuesday.

Nonetheless, the effects of our special campaign last January appears to be wearing off; there has been a declining trend since our peak of 251 who reported that month. There has been a similar decline in our number of donors at the D.C. center. There may be a need for another special publicity campaign (taking advantage of "Pete the Pint" who has become popular as a symbol of the program) in the near future.

5. Chorale Club:

The premiere concerts by the Chorale Club in the auditorium on 1 and 2 May were well-received. The house was almost full on both days. Club officers are studying their requirement for a piano or organ and expect to present a specific request for your consideration in the near future.

6. Optional Civil Service Retirement at Age 55 with 30 years of Service:

According to newspaper accounts (Joseph Young, The Evening Star, 8 May 1963), Civil Service Commission officials are countering the proposal for optional retirement at age 55 with 30 years of service and no reduction in annuity by proposing that agency heads be given authority to retire employees involuntarily on the same basis. (At present, an employee can retire optionally at age 55 with 30 years of service but his annuity is reduced by 5 percent. He cannot be involuntarily retired under these circumstances but is eligible for an immediate annuity with the same reduction if involuntarily separated, not for cause.) The House Post Office and Civil Service Committee has referred a number of bills proposing 30-year optional retirement to a sub-committee for study.

7. Early Retirement:

The "briefing book" was not completed by 10 May as anticipated. However, substantive progress was made. This continues to carry a number one priority both with us and with the Legislative Counsel.

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Mr. [REDACTED] has arranged for reproduction of the material by the OCI Graphics Section and has already sent the Sectional Analysis and Explanation to process. The presentation of cost estimates covering non-retirement provisions of the bill is the main stumbling block at present, the problem being whether to acknowledge clearly that we have in fact already extended certain benefits for which specific authorization is contained in our bill. Reports from the DD/P officers who are preparing illustrative case material in support of the early retirement provisions are encouraging but we have not yet received any completed cases from them.

8. Increases in GPO Wage Scale:

The GPO Wage Scale changes described in our report of 22 April have been confirmed as initially reported.

9. Quality Step Increases:

Eight new requests for Quality Step Increases were received during the week and seven of these were approved, bringing the total to 17. None has been disapproved but in one case we are investigating the possibility of upgrading of the employee (from GS-5 to GS-6) on the basis of the job information provided in the recommendation for a Quality Step Increase.

We have instituted a procedure for sending notification of approvals to the Head of the Career Service concerned with a request that he ensure that an appropriate ceremony attends the presentation to the employee.

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/s/ Emmett D. Echols

Emmett D. Echols
Director of Personnel

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OD/Pers, [REDACTED] (12 May 1963)

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